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S E C R E T ABUJA 001675

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: DELTA MILITIA LEADER MEETS WITH GOVERNMENT

REF: ABUJA 1673

Classified By: DCM Rick Roberts for Reasons 1.5 (B & D).

1. (S) Dokubo Asari, the leader of a militia recently fighting government forces in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta, met September 29 with GON officials in the capital Abuja. Asari claims he met with President Obasanjo. GON Information Minister Chikelu told the press Asari only met with GON security agencies, and officials in the Presidency and the National Security Advisor's office confirmed to us that he met with GON officials in Abuja but not Obasanjo.

2. (S) Our GON sources say the militia was allowed to table its grievances at the meeting, was offered that GON military forces would not attack the militia if the militia rescinded its threat to attack oil workers and production facilities from October 1. Minister Chikelu told the press that the GON would continue the dialogue, as if a ceasefire had been agreed.

3. (U) Asari told the press that he had met with Obasanjo, the Director for State Security (SSS) and other GON officials. Asari said a temporary ceasefire has been reached, but pointedly did not retract the ultimatum targeting oil workers and oil production facilities. Asari maintained that his militia presented demands that included "a fair and equitable revenue-sharing formula (to give more GON oil revenue to his area)" and the convocation of a "sovereign national conference" to address federalism in general and for his region.

4. (S) COMMENT: It is thus unclear whether anything more than a temporary ceasefire is in place, although as reported reftel the battlefield has been relatively calm the past few days.
CAMPBELL